

NEWS RELEASE

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DeNUCCI SAYS STATE SCHOOLS ARE COMPLYING WITH FEDERAL DATA REQUIREMENTS ON FOREIGN STUDENTS

State Auditor Joe DeNucci reported today that Massachusetts' state colleges and universities are complying with federal recordkeeping requirements concerning nonimmigrant foreign students. However, they have been unable to crosscheck information on foreign students with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) because the INS is not providing them with the required data.

According to DeNucci's audit, because of the inability of the INS to supply them with necessary information, the schools have been unable to confirm whether foreign students listed in federal records are full-time, nor have they been able to supply the names and current addresses of all students on visas attending their institutions who do not appear on the INS list.

DeNucci's audit noted that the INS is attempting to refine its recordkeeping and reporting procedures by introducing the Student and Exchange Visitor and Information System (SEVIS), an Internet-based method of accurately monitoring the academic activities of foreign students. This system, which is expected to be fully functional by January 2003, will provide schools and program sponsors with quick access to changes in the status of these students. Currently, two Massachusetts state colleges, Framingham and Worcester, are participating in a SEVIS pilot program and are making progress in information exchanges with the INS.

"I commend the Commonwealth's public colleges and universities for fulfilling their responsibility," said DeNucci. "However, the INS should increase its efforts to implement the new system in order to verify the enrollments of records of foreign students attending colleges in the United States."